

Provo Canyon construction hits new snag

UDOT pushes for a rush job

11-5-98
The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — To avoid paying for a winter work shutdown, highway officials want to complete 2,000 feet of U.S. 189 in Provo Canyon and open the road to four lanes by Dec. 1.

But environmentalists are concerned that rushing the work will mean cutting corners that could damage the river or canyon.

The Utah Department of Transportation doesn't want to financially carry contractor Obayashi Corp. through a winter shutdown. The construction budget in the canyon has already ballooned from \$34 million to \$38 million and the project is six months behind schedule. The project has been delayed by environmental problems, rock slides and widening cracks in newly drilled tunnels.

The project's price tag includes a 2-mile widening and realignment project from Frazier

Park to the Wasatch County line near the turnoff to Sundance Resort. Crews still need to pour 2,000 feet of concrete east of two new tunnels located midway in the 28-mile canyon. Right now, one lane of traffic in each direction is being routed through the north tunnel.

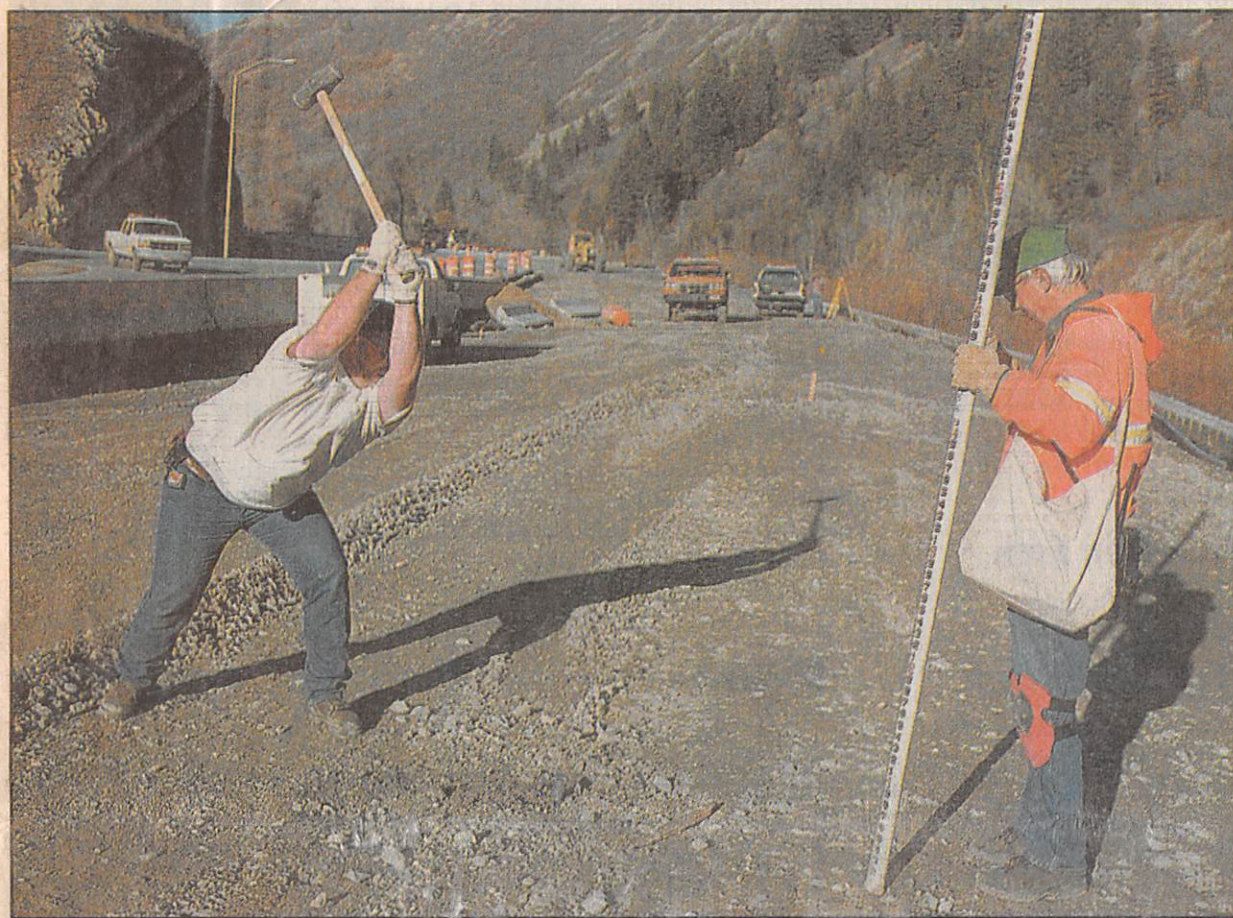
To meet their deadline, crews need "one long day" without rain or snow to pour the concrete, and three to four weeks for curing the road surface, said Jeff Baird, UDOT project engineer.

"If we can get it down in one day, we will. The task requires drying out the roadbed and then fine-grading it," Baird said. "And snow is forecast for Friday."

Sam Rushforth, a member of a group concerned about the Provo Canyon road, said he worries about pushing for the Dec. 1 deadline.

"You're always concerned that corners don't get cut," said Rushforth, who belongs to the Provo River Coalition. The

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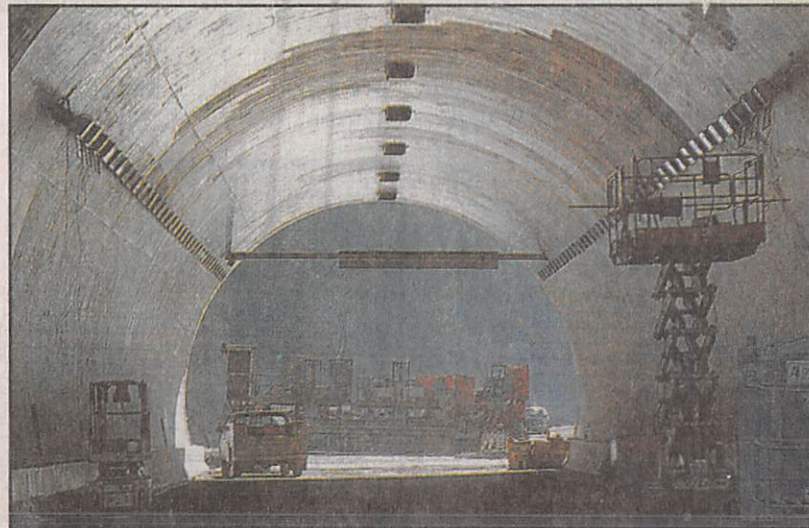


JASON OLSON/The Daily Herald

Road work: A UDOT survey crew sets grade on a section of road to be paved in Provo Canyon on Wednesday.

At right, equipment sits idle near the tunnel in the canyon.

Wet weather has forced contractor Obayashi Corp. to delay pouring concrete to finish the road.



PROVO — A man convicted of abusing children in his Springville home is now scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 10.

A Wednesday sentencing hearing for Arvid Oakley, 54, was continued because a pre-sentencing report wasn't completed in time.

Oakley operated the Superkids of America Club in his home. In a September jury trial, he was convicted of sexually abusing a 5-year-old girl there.

Oakley was originally scheduled to be sentenced Wednesday, but 4th District

Kay Bryson's request to continue sentencing until 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 10.

During the sentencing hearing, prosecutors and defense attorneys may present witnesses and information. Bryson said his witnesses will include testimony from victims, while defense attorneys may bring up Oakley's military service as a medic in Vietnam.

Schofield said he, too, needed more time to consider how he will sentence Oakley. Under minimum mandatory sentencing guidelines, Oakley faces terms of six years to life, 10 years to life and 15 years to life.

Provo looking to finalize purchase of Ironton property

By RYAN VAN BENTHUYSEN
The Daily Herald

PROVO — The City Council could finalize the pending purchase of a large chunk of contaminated land by the end of the year.

The council held an executive session Tuesday to discuss the possible purchase of the Ironton property in south Provo. The 139 acres of contaminated land is owned by Mayor Lewis Billings and a partner, John K. Hansen.

The council voted in March to buy the property, but the deal stalled because of a contract stipulation some council members said they didn't know existed.

Councilman Mark Hathaway said it appears the issue could see a council vote

10 of the uncontaminated acres at Ironton.

The 10 acres could be sold for as much as \$510,000, which is more than the city will pay for the other 139 acres. The city can buy the other 139 acres for \$3,000 a acre, or a total of \$417,000.

Some council members said they were under the impression they were getting the uncontaminated 10 acres at the same price. But if the city doesn't agree to the higher price, Billings and Hansen can sell them to an outsider.

Billings remains uninvolved in the land deal with the city. After critics claimed he had a conflict of interest, Billings turned the land over to a blind trust and can't profit from it until he is out of office. He also won't attend any meetings at

Police Department would expand into the fire station once the new station, near 20 East and 100 North, opens in January. Commissioners also discussed complaints about smells related to large animals in the town residential zone, which surrounds the city's commercial center. Under the existing ordinance, chickens and large animals such as horses and cows are permitted if they are 75 feet away from a dwelling and there is 10,000 square feet of land for each large animal. No action was taken.

American Fork

The Utah County Community Action Agency will be at the senior center, 54 E. Main St., from 9 a.m.-noon today to sign up seniors or people with disabilities for HEAT service. HEAT is a one-time program designed to assist people with their winter utility bills. For information, call the agency at 373-8200 or the center at 763-3090.

Cedar Fort

Parent/teacher conferences will held 3:45-8:45 p.m. tonight at Cedar Valley Elementary School, 40 E. Center St. Parents are welcome to visit with their child's teacher. Teachers ask parents to bring their children and at least one educational goal or objective they would like their children to work on this year. The goal will then be outlined in the child's Student Educational Plan.

Highland

The City Council approved

Lehi

Some fifth-grade students at Lehi Elementary School will learn about the legislative process from their teacher, who will be getting a hands-on education about the process. Teacher David Cox was elected Tuesday to Utah House District 58. He will take office in January.

Lindon

The Board of Adjustments will meet at 7 tonight in the City Hall council room, 100 N. State St., to hear public comments and consider a request for a variance for a lot with less than 100 feet of frontage at 99 S. 200 East.

Mapleton

The City Council tabled approval of an amendment to the city code at their meeting Tuesday. The amendment has to do with setting up a telecommunications interlocal agreement.

Orem

The Orem Senior Friendship Center is doing a blood pressure, sugar and oxygen screening from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

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1555 North Freedom Boulevard
P.O. Box 717, Provo, Utah 84603-0717

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property owners along 800 South who put in sidewalks in front of their property. They are: John Farley, the McMullin family, Donald and Gaylia Daley, Ellaine Biesinger, Diane Johnson, Tom and Janice Peay, Lynn and Sherryl Fowler and Thomas and Kathleen Cohler.

Provo

Mighty Mahogany, a local band, will perform a charity concert to help the Provo Food Bank. The band will play at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the Joseph Smith Building Auditorium at BYU. Admission is one food item at the door.

Salem

The city has a part-time opening for a meter reader. Apply at the city office by 5 p.m. today.

Spanish Fork

Prepping for upcoming snowfall, the City Council

Early Bird
Sale At The

Thanksgit

We Have A Huge Selection

7 Foot Alp
Reg. Sale

CANYON

Continued from A1

consortium of organizations represents fishermen, sportsmen and people interested in protecting the environment.

Groups have voiced concerns about building a road through Provo Canyon for decades, citing traffic problems and potential damage to ecological systems and the Provo River, which supports the canyon's wildlife.

Julie Mack, another member of the Provo River Coalition, said she is worried about the safety of drivers traveling in the winter on a road system that isn't complete.

"The road is a mistake," said Rushforth, of Orem. "It should have been a scaled-down version of what we have."

UDOT's version of the road requires even more work after

the Dec. 1 deadline. Some additional work now covered under the state's contract with Obayashi will have to be postponed until next spring. That work includes covering about 1 mile of slope with a concrete wall. UDOT wants to remove that project from the Obayashi contract and put it to bid next year. The work would be done during the warm-weather construction season, when delays are less likely.

Obayashi spokesman Jim Stevens declined to comment on his company's reaction to the Dec. 1 deadline and being forced to leave the job while contracted work is delayed until spring.

"Our policy is to allow UDOT to speak for us," Stevens said.

Daily Herald staff reporter Ann Potempa contributed to this story.

traffic controllers in the dark

Stanley McClain, an air traffic manager for the Federal Aviation Administration, told KTVX-TV that safety was not compromised and the backup system came back on-line in less than a minute.

"When things blink in this business, one second can seem like a very long period of time ... but the data was there," said McClain.

Scadden said in one minute planes can travel six to 10 miles, and two planes moving toward each other can cover up to 20 miles.

"We're (the pilot's) eyes. If two airplanes are coming together at 35,000 feet they

expect us to maneuver them," he said. "People think, 'No big deal, nobody got hurt.' But the potential for disaster is there."

Scadden said there have been other equipment problems, but this shutdown was more severe. He also decided to make the failure public because the union is frustrated by what he said is shoddy equipment.

Officials at the Salt Lake control center and the FAA regional headquarters in Renton, Wash., were unavailable for comment Wednesday evening.

A new radar system has been installed in several cities and is being put in in Salt Lake. It will be on-line in March.

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